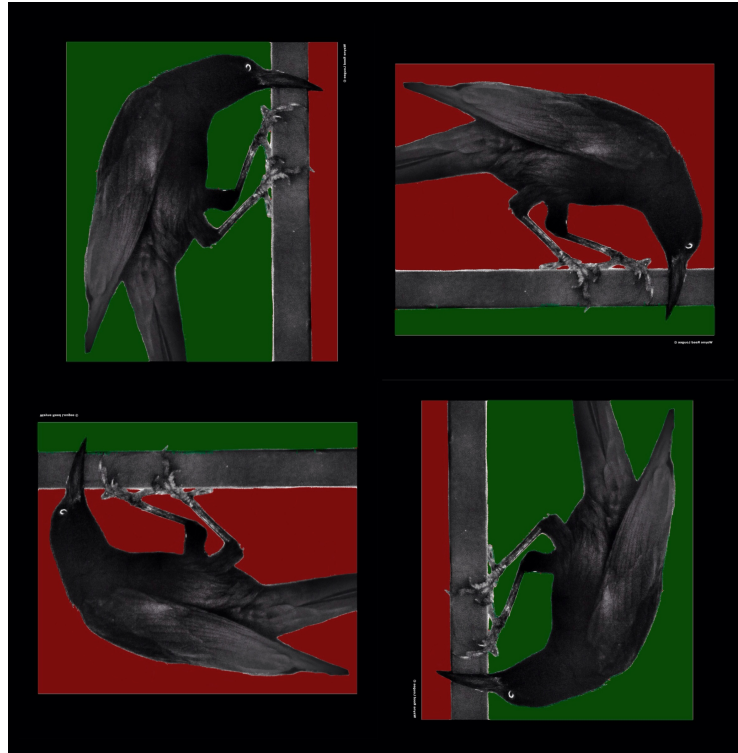
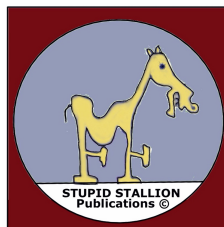


Living a Creative Life



By

Wayne Reed Lougee



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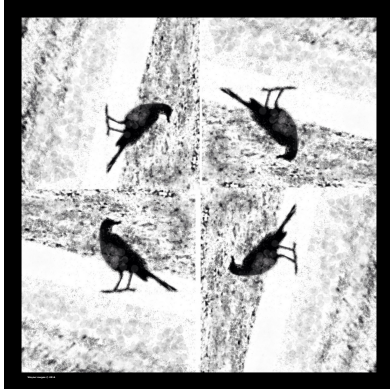
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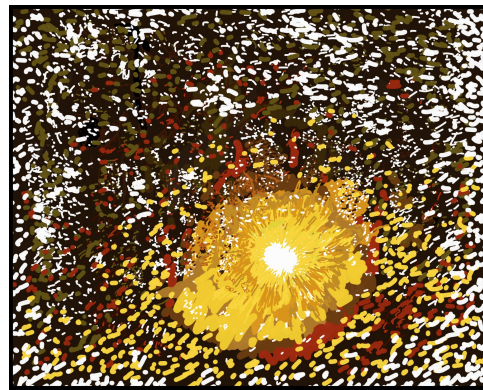
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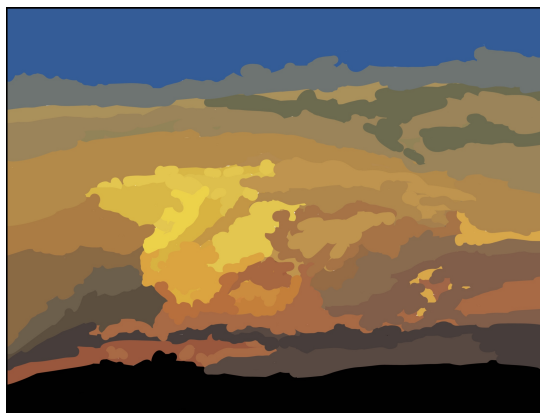


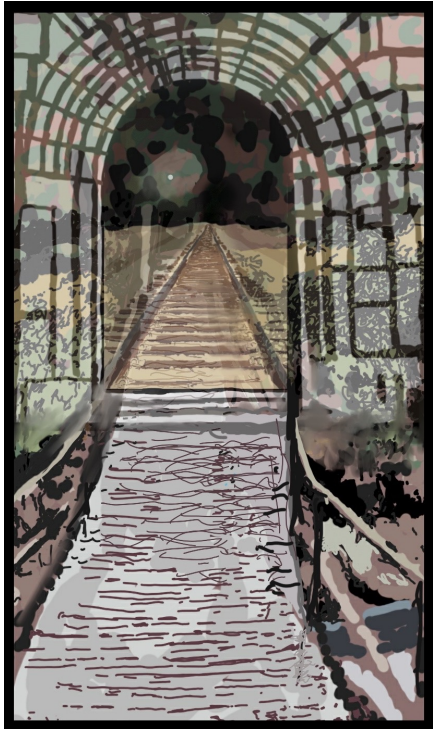
Creativity is an elusive, little understood concept. New ideas are often described as coming to an individual in the form of a spark, like a bolt of lightning out of Heaven. To one watching the creative process unfold, either as the creator or merely an observer, it may seem as if at one moment there is nothing and then an instant later a creative idea is born, as if something has been created out of nothing. But, did the great ideas that brought mankind out of the Dark Ages to the modern world we now live in, really come from mere lightning bolts or even small sparks of new thought? If this is to be believed, then creativity is nothing more than chance. It would depend upon some lucky person standing in the right place at the right time just to be hit with that bolt.

People are also described as being either being creative or non-creative. If we are to believe that creativity comes by mere chance, then people could also be described as being either lucky or unlucky. Is it reasonable to believe that the spark of creativity will only hit one person and not another? Is it not more probable that creativity is a life-long pursuit, a process of asking questions no one else has asked and then working out the many possible answers to those questions? True, the last step in the creative process may seem as if it came from a spark of inspiration, but would that spark really spark by chance? Could it be possible that everyone has been born with the capability to create, but this capability may or may not always be activated? I believe this to be true. In my estimation, anyone can increase their creative capacity by understanding and following the creative processes discussed in this book.



So how does one become creative? If truly creativity a quality, a gift, or an inherent attribute that is bestowed at birth? Can creativity be learned? These are truly some of life's greatest questions that have been pondered upon ever since that famous, but still unknown person figured out that round rolls easier than square. We still do not know or understand all the answers, and there are still many important questions out there that have yet to be thought of, let alone asked, but it seems to be true that everyone comes into this world with innate gifts and talents, that if exercised, will bring us closer to that ultimate knowledge.





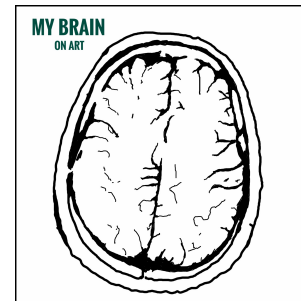
Chapter 1: Why would anyone want to become more creative?



Why would anyone even attempt to increase their creative capability? Although, the last thing I would want to do is to discourage creativity, everyone needs to understand up front that creativity always comes with a price. That price whether great or small will exact a toll that must be understood and accepted. The price exacted may be time, effort, money, respect, support, or more likely the understanding of others, but in all cases a price will be paid. One cannot expect to make progress with anything and expect a so-called free ride. So before I discuss the benefits of living a creative life, let me point out a few of the obstacles that anyone may encounter as they strive to understand and create

what has never been created before.

I have always been a thinker. I have been accused of living more in my brain than I do in the real world. I think about my daily tasks from every angle possible as I am doing my normal work. I, many times, will continue to chew on a tough problem in my quiet off time after the daily noise has settled down. But, what has such thinking really done for me in my occupation? Over the years, I have received one piece of advice no matter what job I may have been doing. This advice is: "Don't think too much about the job; just do what you are told to do and you won't get into trouble. The boss knows what is wanted and we should give the boss exactly what is asked for, even if we know the boss's plan is flawed."



Even in the face of such resistance, I will still fight back saying, "I know a better way." I fight back not because someone might actually listen to my idea, but because I have learned to enjoy exercising such creative thought. I have learned how to live and enjoy a creative life. Others may not take my ideas and change the way the world turns, but I have learned the joy of self satisfaction through an increased awareness of the world and how it works.



Some will say that there is no room for independent thinking like "pie in the sky" concepts that can never be used in the real world. They will say "quit thinking and get back to work."

With so much negative feedback encouraging all to conform and do things the way they have always been done, why would anyone want to step out of their so-called comfort zone and create something

different, or devise a better way of getting the job done? There must be a powerful, intrinsic reward for someone to want to develop their own creative side, especially when it would seem that sometimes creative thought is not only unwanted or unappreciated, it is rarely understood, rewarded, or used.



The benefits of living a creative life cannot always be valued with money or popularity. A truly creative mind must learn to find personal joy in the creative process even when it is misunderstood by the world. You may develop ten, fifteen, or even a hundred great ideas before one of those ideas is ever appreciated by someone else. Of course the one success is something to celebrate, but a creative person finds ways to cherish, save, and reuse the other ninety-nine.

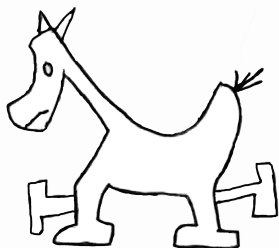
I have created many a piece of art that will just amaze me and make me wonder how I could have ever produced something so wonderful and appealing just to find out that I am the only one who feels the same way. Yet, because I was the artist and I understood and appreciated the process it took to produce that piece of art, I do not need anyone else's opinion to love what I have created. Obviously there is no monetary value in something no one wants, but I find that such intrinsic value to the artist is greater than fame or even a commission.

The creative life not only can bring a deep personal satisfaction in what has and what can be produced, it also fosters a more complete life of wonderment and joy. It has given me a real purpose for living and has ensured that I will pass down to my children a wonderful inheritance of art, books, and ideas. When all is said and done, it will be the creative ones who will be remembered. They will be remembered because they will have created that which is unique and have not just tried to blend in with everyone else.



The creative person very often stands alone, away from the crowd. There will always be potentially creative people standing in the crowd, but until they choose to walk away from their risk free, predictable life following the latest fad, or worse, wasting their minds, the creative seed inside them will probably wither and die.

At this point, I would like to insert a quick personal story that I will call "This is a Horse" to demonstrate the value of developing talents that lead to living a creative life. This story tells of a simple event in my life that even though may be simple it truly has continued to bless my life.



High school, as with most people, was a very fundamental development period for me. It was in high school that I began to understand the basic principles of developing creativity. The teenage years can be very hard on a young person and many of my friends learned very quickly to just blend in with the crowd in order to avoid the ridicule of being different. According to our unwritten social rules,

only a few students were allowed to stand out from the crowd. These usually included the varsity quarterback, the prom queen, the universally anointed class clown, and possibly the class academic brain. Everyone else was expected to take their assigned place and not complain. I didn't like my original assigned place. I was a terrible athlete, socially not prom material, and couldn't compete grade-wise with Dan the class valedictorian. My best chance of breaking out of the crowd was to compete for the class clown position. This where the horse comes in to this story

The above drawing is the horse. I had always been interested in art and made sure my schedule included an art class every year from seventh grade through my first year in college. In junior high, the art teachers were kind, but did not enforce the discipline needed to push the students. But, for my three years in high school, Miss Hoag, later to be called Mrs. Page, taught art with a discipline that would not bend. I was a fairly good artist and I did thrive under Mrs. Page's tutelage, but one day while just doodling I created an odd drawing of a cartoon horse. Although, not a masterpiece by any definition, I was mesmerized by what I had created.



The horse had a distinct swayed back, long neck, and a tail made of stubble. What was most interesting to me was that both the front and rear left feet were fixed to the ground, but the right fore foot stuck straight out towards the front and the rear left leg was positioned the same with the exception of pointing straight backwards. The obvious joke was that any such horse in this particular position would fall on its side. I quickly finished my drawing by adding the title, "This is a Horse."

Mrs. Page had a length of wall set aside for showing off the best of her students art work. That morning, while under the influence of wonderment that the horse would not fall off the the paper, I taped it to wall with all the other art classics. Mrs. Page, having more traditional art discipline than an eye for understanding the impossible, saw the drawing, tore it down, identified me as the artist, and threw the paper in the trash. The next day she came into her class room only to find the horse back in its place on the wall. Almost every day for the rest of the year, the horse reappeared and the was thrown away.



It was years later that I realized that I could see something creative and maybe even useful in that simple cartoon horse that my teacher couldn't or didn't take the time to see. I found that through my creative eye that I could learn to see things that others could not see.

Over the years, I found that



creative people truly do live fuller lives. They are not only able to see things others cannot see, they also experience feelings others cannot feel. In fact, every human sense or sensation can be enhanced through exercising creative thought and practices. Just as my senses have been enhanced, the picture below is an example of how the horse has been enhanced over the years. In most cases he is colored yellow and is known as "Yellow Horse or the Stupid Stallion."

Chapter 1: Assignment

1. Think about and identify areas in your life in which creativity can be improved.
2. Take steps to engage in that chosen activity.
3. Don't worry about what others may think. Don't ask non experts for their opinions.
4. Be aware that there really are very few experts if you are trying to create something that has never been created before.

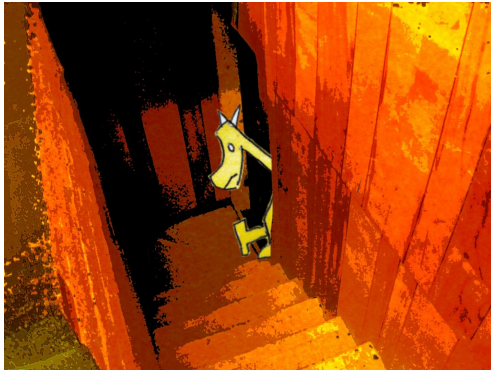
Horse Tales® by Wayne Lougee



The Stupid Stallion

Chapter 2: Playing in the basement

In my family, I was the third child of seven children. My older sister and brother, though not that much older than me, were emotionally too old to play games with me, my two younger sisters and my two younger brothers. So it came to be that I became family games master. I was unofficially the one responsible for determining and in most cases inventing the games we would play.



We were well acquainted with the art of inventing children's games. Our Aunt Sheryl and to a smaller extent our Uncle Carl had introduced various games for us to play during our summer visits to our grandpa's farm. We would play one game that called for two teams positioned on opposite sides of the farmhouse. A ball would be tossed back and forth over the roof until one team choose to sneak around to the other side of the house and hit one of the opposite team members with the ball, either scoring a point or losing if the ball was caught.

Sheryl also taught us a game about keeping a witch out of the house after we, the children, were left home alone.

Growing up with creative aunts and uncles, brought different individual results to my immediate family. For the most part we learned to love playing games, especially non-commercially purchased games. But, this experience also taught me that I also was very capable of creating fun. From the time of my youth on, and even today, my younger brothers and sisters rely on me to start the fun or create the group activity.

In our family home on Ochoco Avenue we had a very scary basement. I shared a room down there in that basement with my older brother Ken for several years. Ordinarily no one wanted to venture down the dark stairway (the light switch was at the bottom) but they soon found that I could market the scary atmosphere as a playful, fun place. I would entice my younger brothers and sisters down into my haunted world.

One day, possibly while I was lying on my bed or the floor in my bedroom looking up into space, I realized that the cheap tiled ceiling, held in place with framework of metal strips, could support hanging blankets secured with clothes pins. After I hung one blanket, I quickly realized that I could hang more blankets. And, then a wonderful idea was born. I designed a wonderful maze that then could generate multiple fun games to play. I envisioned playing tag or chase in the maze with the lights either on or off. My maze became one of my greatest childhood successes. Over forty years later, my family still talks about the great fun we had playing in the basement blanket maze.



I made up other games downstairs in the haunted basement that also enticed my family to come down and play. One time, I took every toy block, Lincoln Log, strip of wood, etc. that I could find and turned the entire bedroom floor into small scale city with buildings, roads, and highways. My brothers and I found hours of fun in recreating tv car chase scenes with our toy cars and miniature city.

I was born with a craving to discover. I wanted to discover what? I did not really know or care. I just wanted to discover fun. My imagination had no bounds and luckily my parents either looked the other

way or really did not know what I was capable of doing or what I dared to do. The other kids relied on me to get something started and my imagination usually did not let them down.

Curiosity can often work as the catalyst in inspiring creative activity. I have always been curious of how things work and why people act as they do. This curiosity has led to many an interesting situation and in some cases inspired creative ideas that have enriched my whole life. In fact, I cannot conceive of a creative person who is not also a curious person. The following is a story of how I became a very creative coin collector.

One day our parents were out of the house and I remember laying in the family room, the room which was connected the the basement stairs, and thinking that I wanted something to do, but just couldn't think of anything fun. I was laying by our old full-upright piano when an idea sprung into my head. I wondered if I could take the piano to pieces and put it back together again. I wasn't so worried, even though I ought have been, of not putting it back together before my parents came home, but I was worried I might not be able to reassemble the piano so as to function correctly. You see, my curiosity had already led me to take many a watch apart without being able restore even one to a working condition.

I began deconstructing the piano with only a hammer, a pair pliers, and a screwdriver. I removed the top and the back with little problems. Taking the full-sized harp out was not an easy task, but I managed it all by myself. Then as I was completing this task of the disassembling the rest of the framework, I spotted a metal object lying in the dust on the base of piano floor. As I picked it up, I quickly realized the object was a coin, but it wasn't until I cleaned it off that I found that it was an 1869 Indian Head Penny. I was so amazed that I quickly put the piano back into working order and waited for my mother to return to tell her of my find.



When she returned, I told my mother everything, even about the piano. I can't remember how angry she was with me for taking the piano apart, but I learned something from my mother. She took the coin from me, not as punishment, but because she wanted it for her own coin collection. By the time she eventually gave it back to me, my curiosity about coin

collecting had already been implanted in my head. Over the years, I have put together one of the the most creative coin and small object collection of which I have ever seen.

So far in this chapter, I have given examples of personal experiences relating to childhood creativity. I believe that most children are curious about the world around them and express that curiously in creative ways. Therefore I believe one of the best ways to tap into one's creative self is to look back at childhood experiences. Are you as curious as you were as a child? Do you seek creative solutions with the same level of energy as your younger self? Not all of my childhood creative ideas ended up successfully, but is there still something to learn from those failures?

One of my creative failures happened in my sixth grade English class. We had been assigned to read a full book, I guess they are called chapter books by today's youth, and then write a book report. I had never actually read an entire book before and did not do so for this assignment. I had picked a book which had a large illustration on the first page of chapter one, leaving only room for one initial paragraph. I read that paragraph and nothing more. The time came for handing in our reports and I needed a creative way the write a report on a book I had not actually read. And then, the idea struck me. I had read a portion of the book, even if it had only been the opening paragraph, I some knowledge on which to write a report.



With the knowledge of one paragraph and the content of one illustration, I deftly described every fact I knew to be true of the book which I had not fully read. I cannot remember much of that book report, but it is quite possible that my report exceeded in length, but not in information, of that original opening paragraph. I felt I have been very creative in describing the contents of a great book. However, I found I had one problem which I had not covered. I didn't know how the book ended. Any other child may have thought to read the last page also, but no such thought entered my mind. I had a more creative way of solving this problem. I simply added the following line to the end of my paper: "if you would like to find out how this book ends, you will have to read it yourself."

Creative solution, right? Maybe, maybe not, but unfortunately even a below average teacher would see through such a ruse. And, this is exactly what happened, however my lesson in childhood creativity did not end there. When the teacher stated straight out that I "had not read the book", I answered honestly saying "yes I did!" And thus I began another of my lifelong studies under the name of "creative honesty."

Chapter 2 assignment:

1. What do you remember of your childhood experiences? Were you curious? If so, can you describe what you were curious about? Do you feel you were creative? What creative experiences do you remember?
2. How have your childhood experiences affected your adult life? Do you experience the same levels of curiously and creativity as when you were younger? If not, why do you think that is so? If yes, how has that helped you in becoming successful?
3. Looking back, have you learned from both your positive and negative experiences?

4. What do you feel are the barriers for today's youth in developing creative thinking? Do such barriers affect your life too?



Chapter 3: Observations From my Childhood or the Creative Process



Is it possible to teach adults to live more creative lives and to expand their curiosity both in life and thought? Or in other words, is there a creative process that can be learned and developed? In the previous chapter I wrote about several of my childhood creative experiences. It seems fair to say that children either are more creative than adults, or what is more probable, children do not suppress their creative self as many adults tend to do. I was first exposed to this theory when reading the "creative thinking" classic, *Drawing on the Right-Side of the Brain* by Betty Edwards. The theory is that children can create without having to judge whether or not their creations accurately reflect the real world or the world as seen through the adult eye.

However, as the child ages, the expectations of achieving accurate real-world representations become harder and harder until the individual gives up trying to draw or create. If this theory is correct, then it is the child from whom the adult should learn and not the other way around.

The following are several lessons that may be learned from adults studying the child:

1. Achieving adult-like accuracy may not be the best goal
 2. Learn to enjoy the process as much as the product
 3. Regain the ability to play
 4. Attain adult goals through child-like play
 5. Relearn how to set aside harsh self judgements
- I will discuss each point bellow.

Achieving adult-like accuracy may not be the best goal

What does adult-like accuracy really mean? To me it means that adults have trained themselves to see only what they believe adults are supposed to see. Or, in some cases, adults are coached to say they see what is supposed to be seen. An old, but true example of this principle is found in the children story, *The Emperor's New Clothes*, where it took a child to point out what surely should have been obvious to all.

A real-life example of benefits of "unlearning to see as an adult" can be found in the work of the impressionist painters of the late 19th century. For years, painters had been painting shadows as black patches of unlit space because "everyone" knew that shadows are black. But, when the impressionists started really looking at color in their new "unschooled" way, they discovered that shadows were not black, but a combination of many different colors.

This important discovery came to these artists as a child might gaze at colors never before seen. It was through this almost child-like gaze they were able understand that green trees in the bright sunshine can cast reddish-tinted shadows, and human skin under the proper lighting can actually seem to be green.

In this drawing, entitled "Five Trees", which was drawn with art crayons and modified with several computer applications, I have followed the impressionists' theory of green casting red shadows. This is just one example where my obsession with colors of opposite tones actually drove me to create much more vivid drawings than I had drawn previously. These experiments led me to re-examine not only how I looked at colors, but also how I viewed other processes of life that many people rarely question.



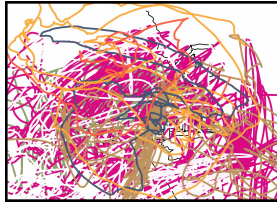
In my photography, I started taking pictures from angles and positions that most people might shy away from. I would ask myself what a room may look like from the ceiling or how the ceiling looks from the floor. I tried experiments with taking photos of only half a face. I took pictures of mundane everyday objects like a bathroom sink and then I would process and sometimes hang such pictures as if they were treasured family portraits.

In all of these experiments, I was learning how to see the world in a way in which most people have never tried to see before. Sometimes my experiments might hit the jackpot and I would produce artwork that everyone seemed to love, but most the time I would just get odd responses such as, "interesting, what is it?" When I get the "what is it" response, it is good for me to remember "public" failure and how I rebound from such failures, is a large part of the creative process.

Learn to enjoy the process as much as the product

Whether they admit it or not, children crave learning. Some may not enjoy formal learning such as in school, but all children desire to learn. Learning is the way we discover the processes of how the world works. Childhood play is one of the best ways for children to learn and discover. I will have more to say about playing below. But, one of the more important concepts that I have observed from my own experience is that playing is fun.

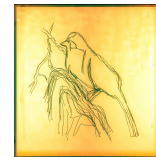
When playing becomes learning and learning leads to a productive creative process, most children will say they had fun just participating in the creation process above and beyond enjoying what it is that they actually have produced.



One Sunday, during church, I found myself occupied with the entertainment of a young child so as to let his mother pay better attention to the service. I opened a drawing program on my electronic tablet and let the young boy just draw. At times I would change the color for him, but the most part of the drawing was his own creation. My young friend had a great time just watching the colors and lines rolling off the tip of his fingers. The whole creative process kept him really quite happy until the time the service ended. In the end, he had enjoyed the act of drawing even without realizing he had actually created a very pleasing work of art.

I used a very similar approach to create a picture of a young bird crying for a meal. The same drawing application produced a child-like background as with the earlier drawing, on top of which, I applied the black cut-out photograph of a baby bird. Maybe not a classic piece of art, but this was really something fun to create.

Adults who can recapture the joy of the process will tend to be more creative, and therefore possibly more productive than their less creative co-workers. I have found that when I turn tasks into games, I enjoy the task more and I generally deliver a better product. This is how the ability to invent your own games as discussed in the last chapter can continue to bless your life



Regain the ability to play

Of course most if not all adults play games at times, but do they really play or do they just follow a predetermined set of rules to see who is the best at a certain activity? There is a distinction between playing organized, established or commercially purchased games and exhibiting playfulness.

From my observation, many adults compartmentalize their life experiences. They may have a time for work, a time for home responsibilities, a time for just relaxing, and a time to play a game or two. Many adults however do not know how mix the art of play with the other areas of their lives so as to become more creative at work or at home, etc.

Playfulness is an attitude that must be nurtured and channeled effectively if one wants to maintain a higher level of creativity. Appropriate playfulness in a well-adjusted adult can be refreshing and invigorating to others and is generally not be seen as mere childish behavior. But, there is a thin line between acting childish and maintaining a child-like ability to make a game out of work.

If you are one who seems to have lost the ability to play or to apply playful principles in your everyday problem solving efforts, you may want to exam why this has happened. There are ways to make a game out something as simple as cleaning out the dishwasher, a game I play on a daily basis.

Later chapters will address distractions to creativity, but one must first want to jump start the creative urge by playing before beginning to understand the distractions.

Attain adult goals through child-like play

Can an adult be retained to understand and implement the principles of play as understood by a child? I think the answer to this question depends on the answer to the next question: Can adult goals be attained through playful principles?

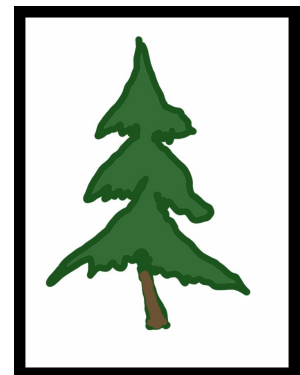


I have taught an adult religious doctrine class at church for many years. The teachers who held that responsibly before me would teach line by line from the manual, lecturing where the book said to lecture and questioning where the book said question. The doctrine taught may have been correct, but the delivery was dry and unimaginative. Many of the adult class members often found reasons not to attend. In the past, I also was one of those who found other things to rather than endure an hour of lecturing.

When I started teaching this class, I decided that I needed to adapt a new method of teaching if I were to reclaim the class members talking outside in the hallways. I looked to my childhood sense of curiosity and decided that every class I taught had to be different in tone and presentation from the previous lessons. I brought in ways to stimulate multiple senses. Every week I would write a poem to be placed on the blackboard which summed up to lesson topic. I took and displayed photographs or personal works of art that could inspire group discussion. At times I would have the class sing songs and then try to get the class to find parallels between the songs and the topic. Over time, I realized that I was just making up games to keep the class' attention. And, the result was that as the class started to play along, others from the hallway began to look in to see what I was presenting. The class size grew because I used the principles of play to entice learning.

Relearn how to set aside harsh self judgments

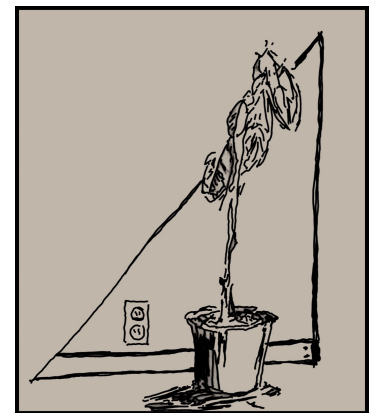
The last principle learned from childhood may be the most important one to understand. To be creative, an adult must learn from the child how to judge one's progress with a child-like excitement. A child may draw a tree which looks like this and feel that it is a great picture. But, many adults would be embarrassed to be asked to draw such a tree, at least to draw it and have it shown in public. How many adults would feel comfortable drawing this picture, framing it and hanging it on their office wall? I think most would be uncomfortable, but why? Probably the first thought would be, "this looks very childish." Then the adult judgment engine turns on and the adult will harshly compare this drawing with an actual tree and declare this drawing not worthy of adult appreciation.





Now, take a closer look at this tree below and ask yourself if it was drawn by a youth or an adult. This tree is more detailed than the first and it leans a bit. Also, a striking difference is that it not only has a tree house, but the tree has actually grown through the house. There is evidence of child-like creativity. The fact that the tree is leaning may upset the artistic judgment of many adults. On the other hand, a child might be quite amazed with this drawing and may study it with curiosity trying to figure out how such a situation could happen. The child's judgment is not as harsh as the adult. The child accepts the drawing for what it is, an interesting situation. (Note: Tree originally leaned more than is depicted here.)

The potted plant at the right, although not in a traditional setting, it may be more acceptable to the adult mind. There is a greater attempt at presenting the objects in a three dimensional setting with shading and shadows. But, what makes the drawing better than the first drawing? In a child's world the answer may not be absolutely nothing, because even children though they may not judge as harshly, will have an opinion of what they like. But, unlike the child, the adult seems to have a greater amount of difficulty finding the value in the first drawing. Why is that?



I believe that in many cases adults fear that they have not progressed artistically since the time when all they could draw was the first tree. And, if they were to try today, that is what they would produce. They have not learned to appreciate what they can produce and then worked on improving.

For a fuller creative experience, adults need to learn to judge and value their abilities and creations with a child-like eye. Remember, most people are not trained to judge your art. They may only look at it with their adult mind.

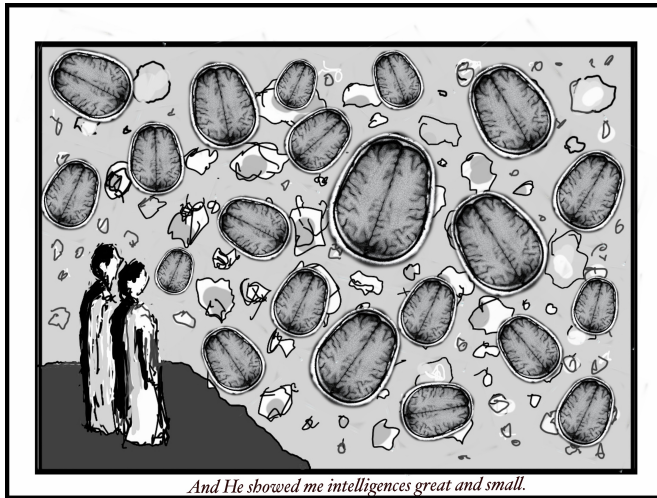
Chapter 3: Assignment

1. Try to remember a scene, a piece of art, a tune, or an activity from your childhood that you really enjoyed, but have long ago put it on your brain's "back burner." Can you remember why you liked it? Did you try to reproduce it in some way as a child? Would you be willing to try again as an adult?

2. Is there any aspect of your adult life or job that can be enhanced by lessons learned from child's play? Can you find a creative way to bring play into to workplace or to treat some monotonous process as a game. Can playfulness or a game improve production? Will it help you enjoy the process as much as just getting to the finish line.

3. Draw a tree. Set it aside for a day. Go back to your drawing and look it over. Decide if you can live with this tree, or draw a second one. You only want to take one to three turns of producing a drawing of a tree that you can use. Once you have selected a drawing, ask yourself what you like and don't like about the drawing. Hang it in a public place for one week and ask others to tell you what they like and don't like about the drawing. This exercise has two purposes. First, it will help break the ice as to displaying something you have created. Second, you can experiment with the various critiques to see if you can create another drawing that you can like even better. But, the bottom line is to see if you can find something you like in something you have created.





Chapter Four: Spending Time in Your Head

I start this chapter with a real-life scan of my own brain. I didn't always like my "brain" or at least felt that mine was a "good" one. I grew up in a small, tough, rural west coast town where I went to school with children, many of which did not come from a family steeped with a strong educational tradition as mine was. As a non-linear thinker in a town which didn't encourage creative thought, I never felt I was competing with most of my friends on the same playing ground or even in the same environment. I did not fit in well, and therefore, I felt I must be dumber than the other children my age.

It was much later that I understood my classmates and some of the teachers were just spending time until we could leave school to pursue lifelong careers in the saw mills or on a ranch. I wasn't pushed intellectually and I didn't push myself either. I just floated through school, spending most of my time just in my head.

"Spending time in one's head", what does this really mean? This is the brain activity that goes on in your head when nothing else important is going on. Some may call this daydreaming, or acting like Walter Mitty. If you are too young to know who Walter Mitty is, I suggest you view the film of the same name.



How do you spend the time when you are all by yourself in your thoughts? Is this a productive time? Are your thoughts creative? Do you ask questions about the world?

around you and then attempt to answer them? Do you try to find answers that defy logic or physical laws? Can you reach beyond the so-called restrictions of the "real world" and answer questions based on creative or even non-real world rules and principles? Or, do you just tune out these kind of thoughts because they are silly?

Creativity is born of thought. This is a pure and simple principle. If after a long day of work, you come home and become an intellectual vegetable by turning off the thought process, the creative process will also be set in the off position. That personal dialogue within your head is where most of creations will first take shape and therefore should be cultivated and exercised.

This chapter is all about how to make better use of your "head time" in order to live a more creative life. In this chapter I will discuss the follow topics which will help you better access and use the personal creative dialogue that happens in your head:

1. Time
2. Schedule
3. Purpose
4. Structure and non-structure or random situations
5. Documentation

Time

Time, in general belongs to you, especially "head time." Granted there are times when your attention belongs to someone else when participating in certain complicated or dangerous procedures, but for the most part your thought time belongs to you. Sometimes you can split your time, such as thinking while driving, or washing the dishes. But, in general, you can decide with what to fill your head at most points within your time here on earth. If you decide to use your time to fill your head with mindless garbage (need not be explained), your personal time is wasted. I make it a priority to exercise my thought process in productive thought that may result in creativity.

Schedule

Some of my greatest ideas have come while driving, showering or taking a bath, and even while having my teeth cleaned at the dentist. Once while I was sitting in my dentist's chair with my dental hygienist's hands in my mouth, I looked around and realized how odd the view from the particular position really is. Here was a bright light shining in my face, a tray with a slew of metal utensils, all accompanied by soothing music. Then I realized that my world view had been tipped at an unnatural angle. I remember thinking how interesting my

view was at that particular moment and how I wished I had a camera implanted in my eye so as to record that awkward view.



Sometimes such thoughts don't come as spontaneous as it did at the dentist. I often find that I need to schedule my head time, especially when I am trying to work on, or finish, a project. It is hard to have creative thought when I feel anxiety to complete something and

meet a deadline.

If I find that If the atmosphere is not right, I cannot start the the creative thought process in my head. Most of the concepts that I have included in this book were conceived and written in places like a doctor's waiting rooms when I am just waiting for someone else to interact with me. For some reason a waiting room was the best place for me to write and so I found my self arriving early for my doctor's appointment so as to schedule time to think and write.



On the other hand, many of my illustrations and photos included in this book were created while seated in my living room easy chair after a long day in the office. Over time I have learned to schedule my creative head time when and where I find I do my best work.

Purpose

You may ask why I devote a chapter to an activity that comes natural to everyone and within the space of any 24 hours, most people have to spend some time alone thinking.

I cannot deny that it is true, we all think and our brains never really shut down. Even when we sleep, our brains are still chugging away stirring up dreams and keeping our bodies running.

So, for what purpose am I writing about "head time" or spending time in my head? I make a distinction between normal thinking and thinking with a creative purpose. This is not to say that I always start out with a purpose when I find myself in a creative mood. Sometimes a thought or a smell, or something I chance to see will start me thinking spontaneously and without any particular purpose. In such cases the creative purpose may originate the creative thought, but the purpose comes later. At other times, I may already have a purpose and just need to find the creative muse to get started.

Structured versus Non-structured or Random Situations

In my life, the creative purpose often takes the form of looking for a chance to cause commotion so as to perceive the world in a non-structured way. This kind of perception usually helps me think in a way that brings out creative thought. Structured situations can also be used if you are able transform the even into commotion just within your head. Either way, creativity is usually born out of perceiving the world at a different angle.

Documentation

Creativity needs to be documented if the world is to make use of such thought. I have known people who have made up music without writing it down and others who have created wonderful drawings just to be thrown away. Where there is no record, there might as well not have been a creative thought. Even creative thoughts that seem to lead to no where may end up becoming a part of something else years later if the original thought has not been destroyed. I always recommend saving everything until you are certain that it will never be

used again, and then save it any way. You really never know when something as a creative thought is of no use.

I spoke earlier of having a bit of the class clown in me. Here is a story that illustrates this clown. During my first year at the University of Oregon, I shared an apartment with my brother Ken and our hometown friend, Steve. Steve and I returned home to our apartment each day earlier than my brother Ken, Ken was in law school and had to study much more than myself. One day, I was looking to create a little trouble, or in other words, I had a vague purpose of doing something, but I had not yet found my muse. Looking around the room, Steve and I found two items that always seem to go together, an apple (my brother's apple) and a tube of superglue. I had found my purpose, that is to get on my brother's nerves and I had also found my muse, an apple and a tube of superglue. Now all I needed was to complete the creative process by developing a plan. The purpose came easy to me, having over 20 years of preparation. The muse was handy and required little effort, but in this case the plan took a bit more creative thought.



The whole plan did not come to me all at once, but I learned very quickly that the only place to superglue an apple in a college apartment was to the living room ceiling. This effort took several tries as that apples do not generally like to be glued to a ceiling. However once it was stuck there, there it stayed.

The following is an exact transcript of the conversation which took place between Ken and myself when he walked in the room:

ceiling?

Me: What apple?

Ken: That apple there on the ceiling!

Me: I don't see an apple on the ceiling.

Ken: That apple right there on the ceiling!

Me: I don't see an apple on the ceiling.

Ken: That apple right there on the ceiling!

Me: I don't see an apple on the ceiling.

Ken: That apple right there on the ceiling!

Me: I don't see an apple on the ceiling.

Ken: That apple right there on the ceiling!

Me: I don't see an apple on the ceiling.

Ken: That apple right there on the ceiling!

Me: I don't see an apple on the ceiling.

Ken: That apple right there on the ceiling!

Me: I don't see an apple on the ceiling.

..... (Time passes, but the conversation continues.).....

Ken: That apple right there on the ceiling!

Ken: What's my apple doing on the

Me: I don't see an apple on the ceiling.
Ken: That apple right there on the ceiling!
Me: I don't see an apple on the ceiling.
Ken: That apple right there on the ceiling!
Me: I don't see an apple on the ceiling.

So, you can see there was a lot of commotion going on. On one hand, my brother refuse to recognize that an apple on the ceiling was unusual and just want to know why it was in there. On the other hand, I was trying to erroneously create a perception in my brother's mind that he was seeing things. My brother could have just pulled the apple down, but he insisted on trying to show me that there really was a apple on the ceiling.

Looking back on this trick, I have entertained quite a bit of creative thought that resulted in several pieces of are that I would have otherwise not have drawn. It was a funny event, but I used it to expand my creativity and my art.

Chapter 4: Assignment

1. Determine how you can best use your head time to develop greater creativity.
2. Determine when and where you can best think.
3. Find a purpose in these activities which can bring you joy.
4. Document your creative thoughts by writing them down or producing something creative of your own.





Chapter 5: Asking questions that are never asked

Recently, I was riding in the car with my wife, who is a very creative person in her own way, but also, unlike myself, very practical more logical than me. We passed an office (actually it was a house pretending to be an office) with a sign planted in the yard indicating a psychic was employed inside. The sign got me thinking and after a long period of thought lasting at

least ten or so seconds, I blurted out the following question: What would inspire a person to grow up to be a psychic?

My practical and logical wife, was both paying attention to her driving so as to avoid an accident and trying to figure out which lane she needed to be in so as to ensure we would arrive at our destination, took less than ten seconds (it was closer to .5 seconds) to answer my deeply thought out question. She said, "I don't know." Her answer, considering the circumstances (and also because I know she will read this book), was well thought out and to the point, taking account of her situation.

Sensing that the question had not been completely worked over and sensing my wife did not share my same level of curiosity regarding this topic, I began to offer up my own theories as to why a person would take up a psychic career, after all, I had been studying this question now for almost 12 seconds. I had practically become the world's number one experience on questioning the career choice of a psychic. I explained that psychics had to fall into one of two categories, either they were frauds or they were mentally ill.

My wife, though she didn't say so in as many words, left me with the impression that I may have not covered the complete spectrum of answers to my question. So I spent a little more time and effort trying to think this out. I finally was able to come up with many more, maybe more reasonable reasons for such a career choice, even possibly some people may really have a special gift in this area.

I tell this story for a very specific reason.. I feel that in many areas that we have little practical experience, we fail to ask and try to answer the best questions for understanding a particular issue. Curiosity requires asking such questions, in our own minds, about the things we have never before experienced. We need to think about things that we may have had very little interest in previously, but now have reason to better understand.

In art this principle is often presented in the form of why did a certain artist paint a particular picture. This happened to me the first time I saw a copy of Jackson Pollock's painting



Number One. Here is my version I like to call Number One Minus One. I had been raised in a more traditional art background and had no experience as to why someone would use

good art supplies to create something that has so little in common to the art created by the respected masters like Rembrandt, etc.

I was reading a biography of one of my favorite artists, John Constable and I started looking at the artwork of William Turner, one of Constable's contemporaries. I had stayed away from Turner's art because I didn't like it or understand it. It was all blurry without the detail I liked. Then I started asking myself what Turner was trying to do? What was his motivation in presenting the world as he did?



Once I started asking such questions, I started to understand that Jackson Pollock was just taking what Turner had created and had gone a few more steps in his search for creativity. Where Turner had minimized the details, Pollock had removed the details completely.

I'm not sure this line of thought helped me like either man's work more, but I started to understand that I had never asked myself the right questions about their art and I found that I would never understand them unless I took the time to ponder these issues.

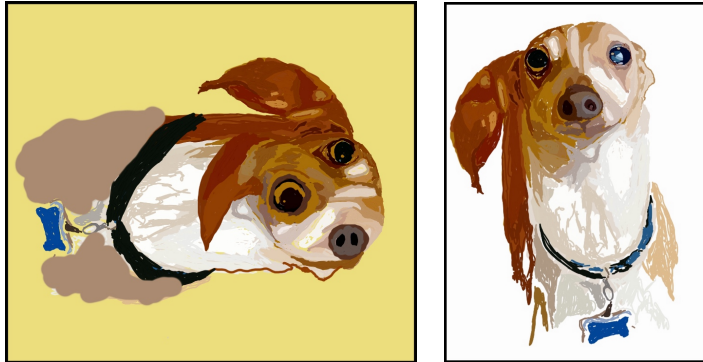
I will say that I have over the years developed some very important skills that helped my creativity by studying these two men. The piece that is seen above is my version of what I call Turner's North Sea Bay. It is not my best work but it does use the effect that I have spoken about in reducing the overall details of a picture.

Chapter Five: Assignment

1. Pick an artist or writer that you have never liked.
2. List the reasons that you feel the way you do.
3. List questions that you would ask the person if you could about why the person created what they did.
4. Try to create something in the style of the person.
5. Think about whether or not you have changed your mind on this person.
6. Think about if this process has improved your ability to create.



Chapter 6: Extending your senses



I come from a long line of dog owners. I cannot remember any great length of time that my family did not have a dog of one sort or another. Over the years, I have come to appreciate the lessons I have learned from our family pets. In the world, working dogs, in particular, have long been bred and trained to use their particular senses for specific duties such as guard dogs, drug smelling dogs, and companion dogs, etc. A dog can truly use its in read senses, if developed, for many good purposes.

Our Italian Greyhound is now going on 17 years old, (Note: This was at the time I originally wrote the secretion, this dog has since died, but he will never be forgotten.) He is a sight hound that has lived his life depending on both his speed and sight. Now in his old age he suffers from arthritis and cataracts and so he has had to adapt his life by relying on other senses, including touch, smell, and sound to get around.

At the same time, our Wire-Haired Fox Terrier really never did see all that well. With its long shabby eyebrows covering his sensitive eyes, he relied on both smell and sound to guide him. When I tossed him a treat such as slice of peeled apple, I usually would have tap my foot on the floor near the apple slice before he would find it. Smell and sound, unlike the greyhound's sight and speed, were the senses that this terrier developed. This terrier really loved things with exotic smells. After coming out of the bath smelling so nice, he would beg to go outside just to roll in something stinky that better appealed to his tastes.

The fact is that our pet dogs really learned how to depend on their various senses to get through their day. When input from one specific sense became blocked by age or sickness, they could adapt their lives by learning to depend on their other senses.

We have not only been born with personal gifts and talents, most of us have access to our five senses, seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, and tasting. In my life, I have liked to think of each of these individual sense as a specific pallet from which I can select, just like different colors to paint with.



Those my age most likely remember the TV show The Six Million Dollar Man, where the main character Steve Austin, bodily damaged in an accident, was rebuilt by scientists using technology that turned his body into a machine that could do things the regular body could not do. He could outrun a car and jump over buildings. Many children of the time talked about what it would be like to have a body tune up to do what others could not do. The truth is that if we could tune not only our bodies, but our senses, to operate more effectively, we could accomplish great things. I doubt we cannot learn to see through solid walls or hear a pin drop 100 miles away, but we can tune our senses to work better.

I can't help sharing a true story at this juncture. I remember one day at a doctor's appointment when I told my doctor that I seem to see things that others can't see. My doctor, being used to my sense of humor was not shocked by this statement, but wisely asked me, "what do you mean by seeing things?" The statement on my behalf was a real and I did want to talk it out, so I quickly assured the doctor that I was not hallucinating or seeing objects that really were not there. My issue was that I seemed to see answers to problems that others could not see and when I explained the answers, others still did not understand. My doctor visibly relaxed after I further explained my so-called extraordinary sight.

I can't remember my doctor's actual response, but I do remember we had a discussion about why some people see concepts that are further away than others. In this world, there are obviously big picture thinkers and detail thinkers. The world needs both types of thinkers if we are to progress. But, some people, like myself can see the big picture better than most, but I find that I am almost blind when it comes to seeing the details. Others are just the opposite. They are detail people who are blind to the greater plan. I have always found that when I lead a project that I have greater success when I team with someone who can handle the details because I cannot.

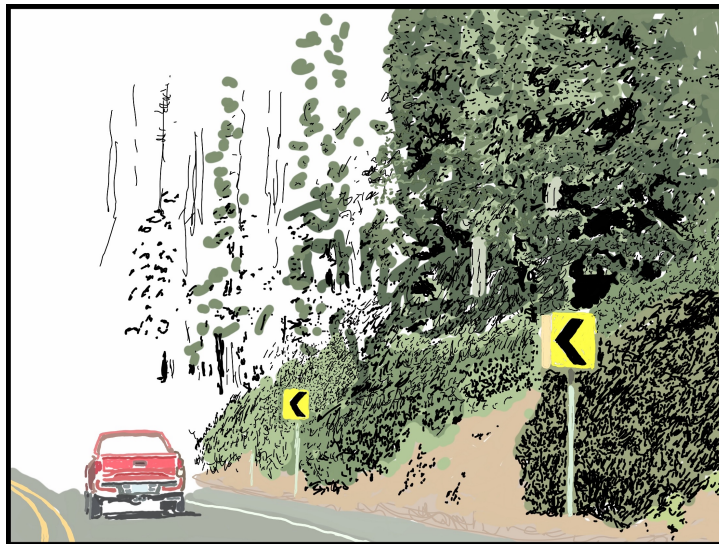
Knowing your blind spots is the first step in improving your senses. Just like the tuned up Steve Austin who could run at 100 miles per hour, working with improved senses can help anyone perform at a higher level, but you must first understand what dangers higher performance can bring.

We all have sensory blind spots. We see many different concepts with blinders on. We sometimes hear only what we want to hear. Even our senses of touch and smell can deceive us at times. I am more of a visual person so my experience may tend to be more visual centric, but I believe we can work to improve the use of all of our senses.

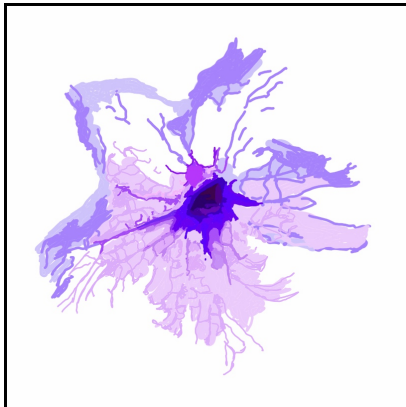
Visually, I try to stretch my visual understanding in everything I see. Presently I am sitting in a doctor's office looking at the floor and trying to imagine how it would look if it suddenly split open as in earthquakes seen in old movies. I not only see the floor as it is, but how it could be under other conditions. This same concept could apply to the use of any other sense or even combination of senses. If the smell of an apple can lead a person to taste that apple so as to compare the relationship of the smell to the actual taste, then could the taste of burning tires be imagined by just smelling? What also can be imagined through touch or sound? Could shapes be determined with sound alone, maybe with a limited addition of some touch? An enhanced capability to record or imagine sensory responses may well lead to even creative solutions.

Chapter 4: Assignment

1. Write a short story, poem or an article about an event, and submit it to a local newspaper or magazine.
2. Create a work of art and hang it in your office.
3. Organize a family event or project such as a reunion or a collection of family stories.
4. Volunteer to help or organize a community event.
5. Tutor a school child.
6. Pick a new activity that interests you but you have never tried before



Chapter 7: Exploring the three dimensional myth



When we create art on a 2 dimensional surface most of the time we try to make our art look as if it is 3 dimensional, not 2 dimensional. (I understand that there is actual 3 dimensional art work such as sculpture which has it's own issues, but I am not referring to such in this chapter), There are a lot of artistic principles that need to be applied such as perspective, shape, shading, and color to make the magic of 3 dimensional images pop out of a 2 dimensional space.

However, the one decides how the 3 dimensional trick is to be performed (and it is a trick) this area of production creates a lot of room for greater personal creativity. The artist Escher comes to mind as someone who really

expanded the viewer's space on a mere 2 dimensional surface.

But, the 3 dimensional concept on a 2 dimensional surface is still a myth. A trick performed by the artist for the enjoyment of the viewer. The work surface is 2 dimensional, but it our choice how to use that surface to render an image that can represent any dimensional perspective wanted. The first idea I think about when starting a new project is whether or not I even want to go down the so-called mythological 3 dimension path and if so, how am I going to best achieve that goal. Sometimes a subject can be well represented in a 2 dimensional world and does not need an extra dimension, Sometimes we may want 3 dimensions, but only applied very lightly. At other times, we really do want to go for a full 3 dimensional look.



The choice is up to the artist as to how a subject is to be



presented. It takes creativity to make the choice. A non creative person usually defaults to the full 3 dimensional look without thinking about any other options. Many times a person will fail to represent the subject well because the image's shading has been over worked and the image no longer looks the artist intended it to look.

Shading or over shading can be a restriction to creativity if not used correctly. If an artist starts to early to add shading the 2, 2.5, and 3 dimensional decision may be already made and the opportunities for creativity is limited. I usually think through issues of view, perspective, shape, detail, and color before I turn to shading.

Perspective is important for making a 3 dimensional image. Think how some objects can look 2 dimensional if looked straight on and how when the object is turned, other dimensions seem to pop out. I first turn to perspective as my 3 dimensional decision maker.

Shape is another factor to consider. Sometimes, just by making slight changes in an object's shape, the object starts to change from 2



dimensional to 3 dimensional.

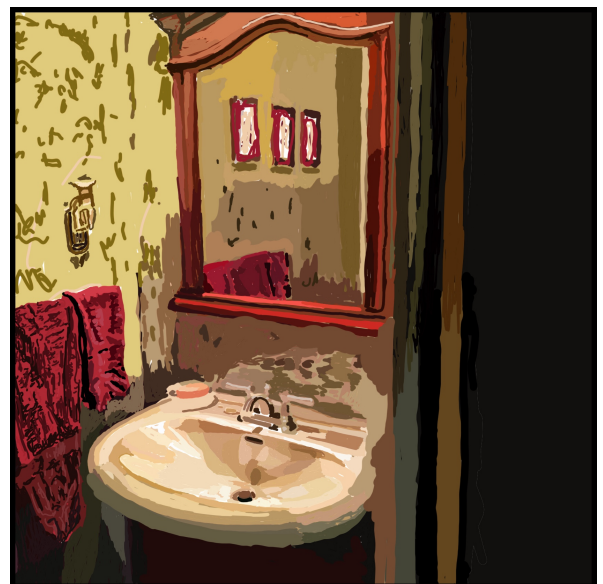
Extra detail and different shades of color can do the same thing. Last of all, I decide what types of shading is or isn't needed.

Shading can be added through extra details such as lines. It can be increased by using different shades of colors or adding shadows. Remember, shadows do not need to be black. Try different colors for shadows and see if such colors don't improve the image.



Chapter 7: Assignment

1. Find an image that would look good as just a 2 dimensional picture and draw it.
2. Draw a 3 dimensional image using different ways to bring out the dimensions.





Chapter 8: There is no box, except maybe restrictions the in one's head

One of my favorite movies was not well received and long forgotten. It was directed by a young Jack Nicholson and titled *Head*. In fact, it was just a silly movie starring the TV musical group The Monkeys and either had no plot or at least appeared to most viewers to be devoid of plot. Throughout the film, the four singers spend much of their time either outside or inside of confining or box-like spaces, ending up by freeing themselves only to discover that they were still trapped into a large glass fish aquarium. Why do I call this one of my favorite movies? Because, even though, others may say we need to think outside of the box, it was this movie that first got me thinking that it may not matter if I am in or outside of any box.

if it does not matter what I do and I seem to always find myself stuck within an even larger box, then I begin to wonder what if there is a box to begin with. This chapter is dedicated to "the box" even if it doesn't exist.

No matter where you go, people are always talking about people who are said to think outside of the box. What exactly is an outside of the box thinker? For that matter, what is this so-called box? Is there a relationship between "the box" and "the wall", meaning do they mean that an out of the box thinker is the same as an off the wall thinker?



To better understand this conversation of boxes and possibly walls, we first need to explore our traditional terminology relating to creative thinking and how such terminology may actually lead many to accept a lower level of creative abilities instead of encouraging all to strive for greater excellence. In fact by inventing the box, our own words may have in some ways doomed us all to remain inside of one box or another.



I believe that unless we blow up the box, not merely escape from it, we can never understand our true potential.

What is this box that supposedly restricts our ability to think and to solve problems? Have we created the box in our own minds? If thinking outside of the box is a good thing and not all

people are considered out of the box thinkers, the logical conclusion is that all the people who remain in the box are incapable of thinking extraordinary thoughts.

Again, if such a box exists, who is it that place people either in or out of the box? This concept of a box, truly boxes people into at least two bins, the "in the box" bin and the "out of the box" bin. To follow this logic further, any thing or person that can be binned can also

be boxed. Therefore, to put the out of the box thinker in a bin merely places that innovator back into another box that will in turn further confine creative thought. The whole box concept runs contrary to the idea that everyone can learn to produce creative thought, not just those labeled as being out of one box or another.

The concept of the wall is somewhat related to the box. Although we usually don't refer to creative thinkers as being off the wall thinkers (it is usually an idea, not a person, that is usually referred to as being off the wall), the principle is similar. Anything that is labeled on or off the wall is in one made up box or another and can therefore restrict creative thought.

So what would happen if we refused to believe in either the box or the wall? What good, if any, could come of such a belief? And, even more interesting to me is why we, in our environment, and/or our society, continually try to keep people and ideas in boxes. I will begin with the last question first.

I find it interesting that in our modern society, the advancements of technologies, especially those technologies that are supposed to make our lives easier, also seem to require us more and more to divide our very lives up into various entries on various forms, resulting in binning the modern person into hundreds and thousands of boxes. My medical and governmental and other records box me up into bins reflecting my size, weight, income, employment, political party, religious beliefs, mental status, marital status, diet, traffic violations, interests, race, and place of origin. I can list hundreds more boxes that supposedly when put all together make up the whole that is the real me.

And then, after slicing and dicing me into these many boxes, I am told that to be really creative I need to think outside of the box.

Boxing people seems to give us greater comfort to deal with both people and their ideas. It seems very natural that personal, societal, and environmental forces work together to keep us comfortable and safe in one box or another.

What if someone refused to believe in this invisible, comfortable, artificial, and restrictive box. This not to say all personal data no longer exists in all the many medical, personal, and/or government files. What I mean to ask is what would happen if we could learn how to not restrict our capabilities and creativity because of the theory we are contained in such a restricted box? It seems that the world doesn't expect or want us to do things that are beyond what is expected of us in this restricted realm.

Is it possible to forget that a sixth grade teacher might have said we cannot sing well or that a good friend criticized a short story we once wrote? Why should others' opinions and old school records box us in and decide what we can and cannot do?

Creativity is restricted when our thoughts are affected by those who feel comfortable by keeping us confined by artificial means. Only independent thought is truly free thought. Only free thought will fully develop creative thought. Don't think outside of the box, just forget there ever was a box.

As I rode an elevator one morning, I notice the elevator car had been lined with padding for used to protect the walls when transporting large items. I imagined that I was in a padded



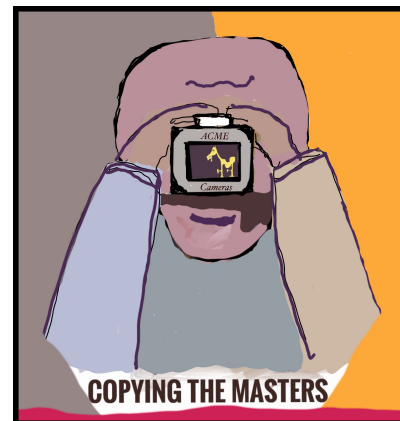
cell or box and it occurred to me that I could sit in that cell for the rest of my life and still be creative by just ignoring my physical restrictions and space. In my mind I could still be anywhere I wanted to be and experience thoughts and feelings unrelated to my cell.

When I was younger, I used to waver between different ideas expressed by others because I didn't know which idea to subscribe to. Only in old age have I set my self free to believe what I want to believe and not what I am expected to believe

If someone says you need to think outside of the box, they have already limited your concept of creativity by believing there is a box in the first place. There is no box. The only box that may exist is a box that is created by ourselves inside of our heads to restrict our choices of how to proceed. Many times we think there are limits to what is available in producing art such as with the old saying that we need to learn how color inside of the lines. At times we to ask ourselves who drew the lines in the first place and why were they put down on the artist's surface?

In this chapter I wanted to discuss how we can identify whether or not we have created an imaginary, restrictive box in our head and how to examine what we have put into that box. We need to look into that box to determine why we feel that we want to live by such restrictions or if we want to just throw that box away.

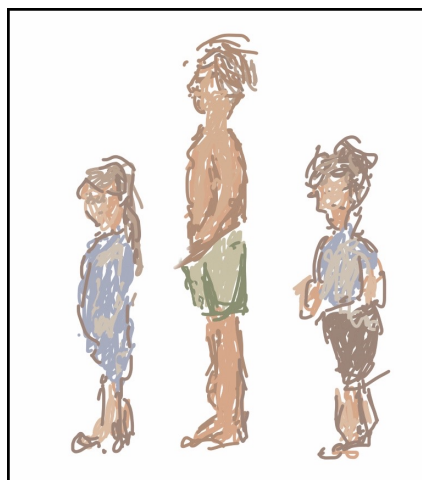
So what is in the box? Rules, Tools, Supplies, or Subjects? Why would we restrict these things? I felt like drawing with stick and using mud as paint, would that be wrong?



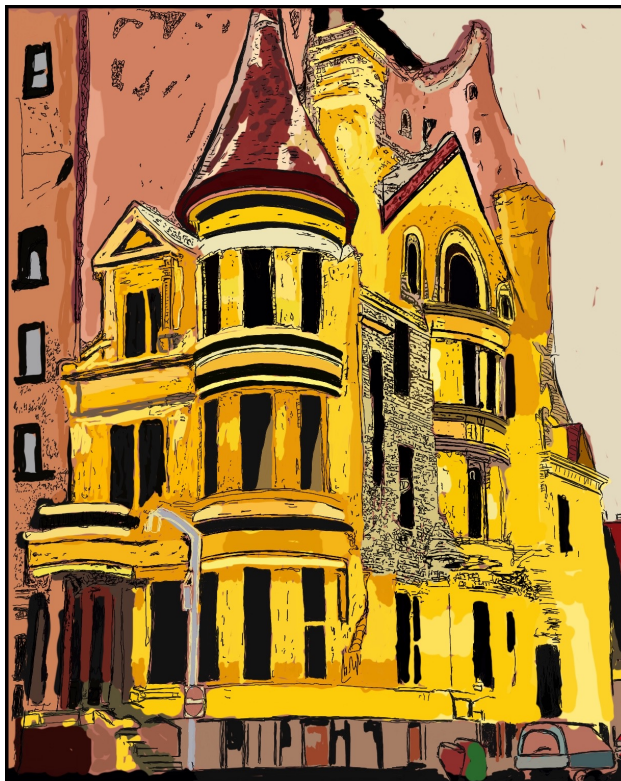
I think that artificial restrictions when applied to our thinking can keep us from doing great things. Blow up the box that restricts such thinking.

Chapter 8: Assignment

1. Look at the picture below. Here are three individuals. What assumptions could you make concerning these three as a group and/or as individuals. List the various boxes they could belong to. List the possible mistakes you may have made in your assumptions and boxes



2. Look at a picture of your self and answer the same questions in question number one.
3. What boxes do you most relate to? How do such boxes restrict your private thought?
4. What boxes do you feel others attach to you? Do these assumptions restrict your decisions?
5. How can you exercise free, unrestricted thought without regard to any artificial label?



Chapter 9: Follow the Leader



In the academic world great penalties are applied to anyone found copying others work and using it for their own research or scholarship. This being known as plagiarism is widely accepted as something that must be avoided at all costs.

With this in mind, is okay to copy someone else's art? The answer is a resounding "YES". However, all copies as well as the actual action of copying another's art must be done in the open, meaning the original artist should be either given credit for being the inspiration for the copy, or the original art must be so famous that any is assumed

to be a copy. The original artist's signature should not be rendered in a way to create confusion in the minds of viewers that the copy may be an original.

A more important question is whether or not there is value in copying. Can copying lead to greater creativity or is the action just like a child filling in a simple coloring book. The answer to this simple question is not simple. It is true that if all someone wants to do is make an exact replication than a copy, a copy machine or a camera may be a better tool to employ, Although, be aware that most private museums do not allow photographs. Most of my person copies of the master's art are from the National Gallery of Art in Washington DC where cameras are encouraged.

However, if a artist truly wants to learn from another artist, especially a master who is no longer living, then coping can be a very powerful process that can lead to greater creativity and art knowledge. In fact, this has been the most prominent way to learn how to paint like a master for the past 500 years.



Traditionally, art lessons would start with copying an older artist's work. Hundreds of years ago, artists would routinely share their own art collection with other artists to copy and thereby learn from.

But, why did they spend so much energy on copying someone else when they could be developing their own artistic style? Were these budding artists only intent on making reproductions of older artists' work for their own audience?

The answer to this last question is absolutely not. They were studying how the original artist used colors and texture to make a classic piece

of art. They studied the topics others used and the perspective achieved in order to learn the basic principles of drawing or painting. They did not only copy, they also added their own style and personality to the copy.

What resulted in following this process was sometimes a completely new piece of art, inspired by the older artist or master. A budding artist may find that the original painting used a style, color, or technique, that was not personally liked, needed or wanted and would change certain aspects within the copy.

I have been copying artwork created by artist masters for years. I have included a few of my copies in this chapter. I copy a lot of Raphael, Vermeer, Van Gogh, Monet, and Rembrandt. I especially love the work of John Constable.



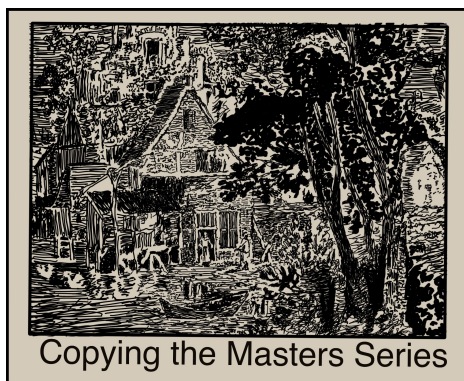
I've read Constable's as well as other artists' biographies trying to learn what they looked for in their work and how they developed their own style. I remember after reading a book on John Singer Sargent of having an increased desire to start a travel diary of drawings. I began to carry around a small notebook and do sketches of places I traveled to whenever I could find the time.

Chapter 9: Assignment

1. There are two assignments for this chapter. The first is fairly easy. Borrow or buy a biography of a known artist and read it. No book report is required, only a desire to understand the artist's motivation, ways of learning, and reasons why and how the artist became a

creative person.

2. The second assignment is to pick a piece of art from a master and using any format, painting, drawing, sculpting, paper, canvas, or digital and to make your own copy in your own style. Do not worry about whether or not your copy is a good reproduction. Only think about how the artist seemed to handle the topic and how you want to handle it. Your copy can include many of the fine details from the original, or on the other hand, such details can be left to the viewer's imagination. Make it your art (as inspired by the master).



Copying the Masters Series

Chapter 10. Fear of being the Leader

Sometimes in life, it seems as if some people do not want stand out in the crowd, looking as if they are different others who are around them. In both art and creativity, many tend to remain in place in exactly the same place as these whom they have studied. In a way this is also copying others, but it is copying for the wrong reason. A creative person must be brave enough to say, "I have created this item, it is unique, and I like it."

If all art were the same and creativity always ran to the same destination, art would cease to be art and creativity would just dwindle away. Everyone come with a different background and has had different experiences. No one of us knows the same things. We all should approach art and creativity from a different point of view. We all can be a leader or a master of whatever we do best.

The digital revolution has also changed or expanded the way we can create art. I will have more to say in a later chapter on this subject, but we can now stand out in the areas that have been opened up by new digital technologies. I know there will always be the purists who do not want use more modern ways to produce their art, and that is okay. There will always be space for creativity using the time honored methods, but for those who want to lead in areas of new technology there is a wide open field to explore.



Personally, I have migrated from paper and traditional techniques to mostly digital technologies over the past few years. I started just because I needed to save space in our home for other things and had no room for more traditional art supplies, frames, and storage.. But, as I continued using digital means, I found my desire for creativity increase and I soon began to experiment mixing media in a way as I had never done before.

Also I have done some crazy things to get a new look to my art. For example, I routinely take a digitized copy of a picture and run it through a digital puzzle app. I put the puzzle together, take a screen shot of the puzzle and then paint out the lines between the puzzle pieces. This process, though strange, does change the picture

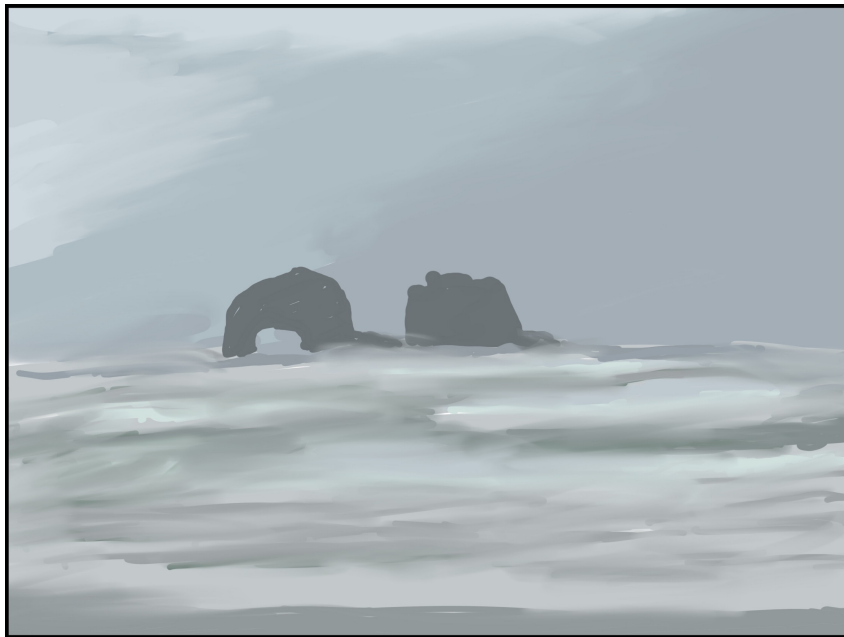
in an unexpected way.

I also have experimented with cartooning and other styles using new techniques that I have never used before. I have a small way become a leader in these new art forms. I am comfortable knowing that the art I now produce is not at all like the processes used to create art 200 or even 500 years ago.

Being a leader in an effort that is not yet universally acknowledged as an accepted art form is not always easy to defend. Others may criticize the work you do and say it is not art. It does not matter what others may say, if you have truly felt creative in doing what you have done. There really are no rules as to what is and is not art.

Chapter 10: Assignment

1. Determine what you enjoy creating, regardless of style, techniques, tools, or format. Ask yourself if this is an area in which you could become a leader within whatever realm of influence you may exist?
2. Show your work to others by either hanging it on your wall, entering a juried contest, or just giving it away to a friend.



Chapter 11: Applying creativity principles to your special talents



This chapter is about untapped gifts. Many people have hidden talents in some areas that have not been developed because the gift is either truly unknown or it is known but the person has never tried to develop that talent. I know many people who could become great artists in many different areas but have not spent the time or the resources to become what they could become.

This principle is the “Biblical” buried talent that is wasted. In my life, the buried talent was my gift to speak in public and to a lesser extent to write.

Remember my earlier story of my first book report. I really didn’t know how to write a paper for school. It wasn’t until college that I started to enjoy writing. I majored in a language and literature program that required one major paper every class and every semester.

These papers were very analytical in nature and require me to investigate specific problems and come to a unique conclusion. I really enjoyed the investigation part of writing these papers and I became fairly good at the creative skills it took to write them. My spelling did not improve, but I found I could write.

Speaking in public came easier to me than writing. But, I still remember as a child how my legs would shake as I stood in front of a group and speak. As I grew, I became very skilled at just speaking off the top of my head with only a few notes to remind me what I wanted to say. Today, I

can honestly say that I truly enjoy speaking to groups and do not require a written script to follow.



In the area of art, I stayed away from drawing the human figure, including hands, feet, and head. I could draw a person very easily if I left off hands, feet, and head. I remember well at an early age drawing people with their arms and hands stuck behind their backs so that I didn’t have to deal with what I felt I couldn’t do.

Faces were very hard for me to draw so as that they looked like who I was drawing. I think that a big part of my problem was that I was trying to add details into my figure drawings that I knew were supposed to be there, but in fact really did not stand out to the degree I was trying to represent. It wasn’t until I started leaving some details out or to the imagination of the viewer that I started improving in this area.

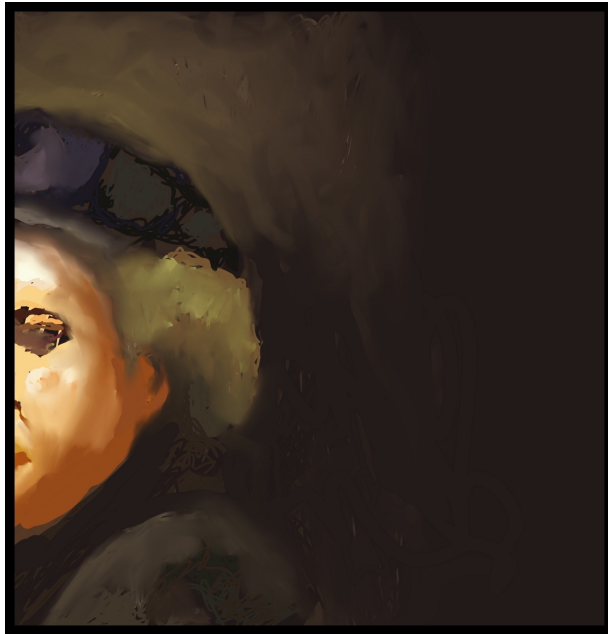




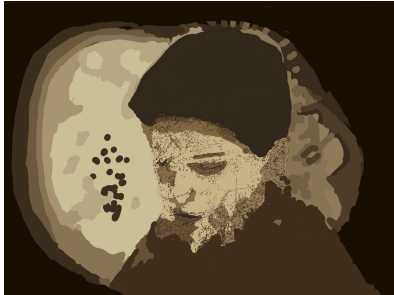
I found that I really did have a talent for drawing people, a fact that surprised me quite a lot. There many artist who draw the human figure better than I do, but when I put in a bit of effort, I really started to improve. This was a true hidden talent of mine that I may never have known about if I hadn't put in the time work on it. I may have many other hidden talents that I just haven't yet discovered.

Chapter 11: Assignment

- 1.Are there any talents that you know of which you probably have but haven't yet developed?
- 2.Do you think that you may have a few truly hidden talents which are still undiscovered?
- 3.If you have listed any talents under the first two items above, make a plan to start developing that talent.



Chapter 12: Barriers to creative thinking



There are definite barriers to creative thinking faced by everyone. I would divide those barriers into two different types, internal and external. Internal, being those barriers that we set up ourselves and external, being barriers that come from either our environment or other people.

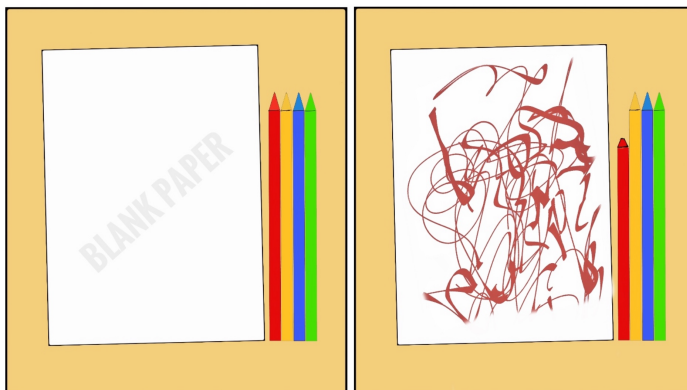
External barriers are not as complex to understand and deal with as internal. External barriers are more concrete to understand, explain, see, and avoid. If an external barrier comes from another person, it generally arrives in the form of criticism or judgment of one's thought or creation. Many people enjoy judging others, especially in areas that they have little expertise to judge.

When dealing with things that are of a creative nature, the basic thing to understand is that a true creation is something that has never been created before. How many potential judges have had experience judging something they have never experienced? Generally speaking, most people's comments on someone's creative thoughts or creations are meaningless unless they have some kind of internal knowledge of what the creator had to go through in order to create their creation.

Do not let poor judges be a barrier to your creative process. Just move on gracefully letting them know that their input was understood, but they cannot stand in the way of your creative process. There are others who really can help you progress, but you may have to search hard to find an advisor who understands what you are trying to do.



One's environment can also present barriers to creative thought. It is generally understood that those who grow up in homes filled with good books more easily try to read and enjoy other's ideas. Wise parents know how to create a good environment in the home for their children to learn to enjoy literature or the arts. At least in America, this is not usually something that requires a lot of extra money. Most families have a television and a computer. Basic supplies used to develop creativity costs much less than these common home appliances.



Paper and a pencil is enough to start with. As one increases in creative thought or skills other supplies can be added as needed. Thought requires very little expenditure and the only supplies needed are those required to document one's thoughts.

As I said above, many of the hard barriers to create thought are the internal ones. Please look closely at



the drawing here representing a blank page and a page that has been scribbled on. One of greatest internal barriers is the difficulty taking a first step to put something down on a blank page.

As I usually say, it is the first stroke of the pen or brush, or the first word to be written down is the hardest part of creation. A creative person needs to make a bold start on a blank page. If one hesitates, the creation will not come. Hesitation is a barrier to creative thought and action.

Maybe you are just not ready to face the blank page. That is okay, if you still need to hold back in order to do more planning. But, at some point, you will need to make that bold start. Give it a try. It may not result in what you really want, but at least you have put an idea down on paper. You can always edit or change what you

started with, but it is impossible to edit a blank page.

Lots of other internal barriers to creative thought are related to one's negative thinking. Many say they can't do something and convince themselves that they can't. Negative thought is very hard to control if such thoughts are not routinely confronted in one's mind. It is far easier to say you can't and therefore don't try than it is to say maybe you can and therefore put out some effort.

Just like in the blank paper example above, a bold attempt is sometimes what it mat take to quiet a negative thought. In time, with positive thought practice such negative thoughts can quiet down, it require positive action on the thinker's part to get such positive results.

Someone with deep seeded negative thought process may take years to realign their thought process to get beyond these self imposed barriers. This realignment does usually happen naturally or without help. The most important task is to recognize whether or not you are suffering from negative thoughts. Help cannot usually come until the problem is recognized.

Chapter 12: Assignment

1. Examine your person situation and determine the barriers in your life that could block creative thought.
2. Are your barriers internal or external, or possibly even both?
3. What steps can you take avoid these barriers?

Chapter 13 Competition: Drawing, Cameras and Digital Technology



In hanging around galleries, art labs, and work shops I meet a lot of artists who are pure in their application of their artwork. Some strictly stay with the traditional methods and materials, while others concentrate on only a single medium.

There is nothing wrong with such concentrated application of traditional art techniques and many of these artists are very creative with their

art. I do not want to discourage this type of creativity.

However, some artists get stuck in a single track and find it hard to break out and create art with many of the newer technologies. These new technologies fall into an area where digital photography and digital technology can be investigated as possible fresh areas for exhibiting creativity.



In the past 150 plus years, there seems to have been a very distinct division between the work of traditional artists and the output of photographers. In fact, early on photography had a difficult time in gaining acceptance as a true art form from many traditional artists. Some might say that a painting gives off an emotional look that the camera cannot catch. I do not want to argue the cons or pros of traditional art and photography in this book, I only want to point out that the competition between photography and traditional art types of arts is in a very quickly fading away in our modern digital era.

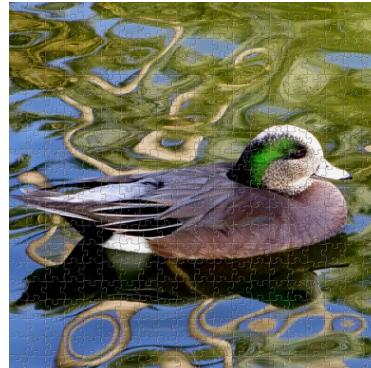


I was one of the early adapters to include digital technology in my traditional art processes. I was never a great photographer and probably still am not considered all that good. I just pointed a shot the camera regardless of whether or not I saw a great picture.

Because of my “point and click” photography process, I learned to hate photography film in that I seemed to waste a lot of expensive film and developing costs. As I continued to work with a traditional camera, I only wanted to actually take a picture if I knew for sure that the results would turn

out good. You could say I had a bit of the “blank paper” hangup when it came to photography and using film.

The digital technologies began to be developed for the purposes of taking pictures in the normal photography process and computer programs were developed to edit digital photography as well as to actually draw or paint in a pure digital environment. These developments greatly changed the art world. It also brought photography and other art techniques into the same creation space.



Photographs can now be easily drawn upon. Traditional art concepts can now include photography processes in the same creation. Other concepts that mixed or fused various digital techniques quickly became available to the average artist to experiment with. The digital revolution truly brought many new ways for the creative process to expand.

Chapter 13: Assignment

1. Take a digital photography. Examine the picture carefully.
2. Either draw over the photograph using digital means, or redraw the photograph on a black digital layer using your own desired style.
3. Look closely at the background of the photograph and determine if there is something very small in that background that can be the basis of a new picture.
4. Follow step 2 above with a blown up portion of the background.





Chapter 14 Summary

I have covered quite a lot of ground in this small book. There are still many more aspects on the topics of creativity and art that can be covered. My purpose in writing this book was not to exhaust the subject, but to inspire others to develop greater creativity.

I have not only been active in showing others how they might try improve, but I have also been dedicated in show my own creations. I share everything I create, good, bad, and unexplainable. I have grown used to hearing others tell me they like some of my work, but also their negative comments on the work they dot like or understand.



I have set up a small alcove in my home off of our living room where I display framed art work from my collection. It is like a small art gallery inside of our home. I usually have 10 to 12 pictures hanging there at any given time.



I have a home cloud, digital backup system where I keep a digital record of everything I produce. I have special storage bins where I have tried to store all my art on paper or canvas that I have created over the years. I try to keep everything I have drawn or painted regardless of whether I like the final results. I have drawings that I made well over 40 years ago. Some of the works in my collection goes back to my high school years.

In the past 3 years, I have been associated with a local gallery and have enter several juried events. I rarely sell my art, preferring to give it away, but if I sell something out of a gallery, I have donated the proceeds to charity.

I also have a very extensive art collection on the internet at the Internet Archive where I have uploaded a digital copy of most of my art collection. The art found at my on line sight is made available for any use except for commercial purposes. Right now I have just under 6,700 items on this site. I welcome anyone to visit this site and leave any comments that are appropriate. Download something you may like and copy it if it inspires you.

Chapter 14: Assignment

1. Find a place that you can comfortably share your work.
2. Tell others your story of how you became an artist or developed greater creativity.
3. Become more involved with your local art community.

